

Sinclair Broadcast Group's recent actions are indicative of the threat to open, responsible, and locally responsive media caused by media consolidation.

Sinclair obtained licenses to use the public airwaves under agreements that obligate them by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control more and more of the airwaves they become more inclined to serve their own interests and to promote their own beliefs, as handed down from headquarters, and less inclined to serve the public good - because they can. An effective democracy is a well-informed democracy, which depends on the media providing open, unbiased, substantive coverage of issues and real news of concern to the people served in the local markets. As a few companies gain control of more and more of the media markets that vital information link is lost. Citizens frustrated with the lack of substantive news coverage, and with the proliferation of sound bites, rhetoric, and the promotion of one point of view under the guise of news, tune out and drop out of the process.

We strive to hold ourselves out to the world as the shining example of democracy - what type of example will we choose? Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them - because democracy must be of the people, by an informed people, for all the people. This means the people as a whole, not a few big companies and their corporate leaders who would lead the country around through monopolized airwaves spoon-feeding the people with their own self-interests. I think licensing should give much higher value to access and public interest, and much less to big business bottom line. Thank you.